

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (original): A method comprising:

stocking a predetermined number of sets of foot orthotics, each set having a standard arch height that is unique for that set;
measuring an arch height of a sole of a foot; and
selecting an orthotic from the set for which the standard arch height most closely matches the measured arch height.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the predetermined number equals three.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the measuring step includes determining the arch height from a footprint of the sole.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 3 wherein the footprint is a thermal image of the sole.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the orthotics can be heat-softened and the method further comprises the step, after the selecting step, of pressing the sole against the selected orthotic while the selected orthotic is installed in a shoe in a heat-softened state.

Claim 6 (original): A method comprising:

engaging a sole of a foot against a thermal imaging device that yields a thermal image of the sole; and
determining a characteristic of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the characteristic is an arch height of the sole.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the imaging device includes a thermally sensitive material that exhibits a change in color with a change in temperature.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 8 wherein the thermally sensitive material is a liquid-crystal-based.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 8 wherein the foot is colder than the thermally sensitive material during the engaging step.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 9 wherein the foot is warmer than the thermally sensitive material during the engaging step.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 11 further comprising the step, before the engaging step, of warming the foot with a warming device.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the imaging device is in the form of a plate configured to lie flat on the ground, and the engaging step includes stepping on the device.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the imaging device yields a thermal image of the sole based on the difference in temperature between the sole and the device.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the thermal image indicates pressure points of the sole.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the thermal image indicates restricted blood flow locations of the sole.

Claims 17-22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (new): An apparatus comprising:

a merchandise rack;

foot orthotics of different arch heights removably supported by the rack; and

a thermal imaging device positioned adjacent to the rack and configured to yield a thermal image of a foot sole for determining an arch height of the sole.

Claim 24 (new): The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the imaging device exhibits a change in color with a change in temperature.

Claim 25 (new): The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the imaging device is in front of the rack.

Claim 26 (new): The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the imaging device is configured for the user to stand on the device for the device to yield the image.

Claim 27 (new): The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the imaging device has the shape of a flat plate configured to lie flat on a floor during use.

Claim 28 (new): The apparatus of claim 23 further comprising a warming pad located adjacent to the imaging device, upon which a user can stand to warm the user's feet before using the imaging device to yield the image.